

DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation announces the Point at Cape Henlopen to Reopen

LEWES (Aug. 29, 2019) – The Point at Cape Henlopen State Park will reopen today, August 29, DNREC's Division of Parks & Recreation announced. The area to reopen includes a stretch of ocean beach and dunes that was previously closed on March 1 to benefit more than 30 species of shorebirds including up to 11 species of terns, six species of gulls, the brown pelican, and the double-crested cormorant as well as threatened and endangered species such as red knots, piping plovers, least terns, oystercatchers, and others.

Piping plovers, least terns and oystercatchers nest on the upper portion of the beach between the high tide line and the toe of the dunes and on large flat areas known as "washover flats" created by storm waves. The flat areas with no or little vegetation are attractive to these species because they provide direct access to the bay where waves are smaller, and feeding is easier.

Oystercatchers use their long bills to probe into the substrate and feed on bivalve mollusks and invertebrates. Piping plovers eat small invertebrates like worms, mollusks and crustaceans gleaned from the surface of wet sand or mud. Various breeds of terns exclusively feed on the fish caught by diving into the water. Other migratory birds feed on invertebrates and by overturning rocks, shells, and debris to catch creatures seeking shelter underneath.

The bayside closure remains in effect until October 1 for use by shorebirds migrating south for the winter. Piping plovers

migrate to the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of the United States; least terns migrate to coastal areas of South America and Central America; oystercatchers typically migrate to the Florida coast and Gulf of Mexico.

DNREC's Divisions of Parks & Recreation, Fish & Wildlife, and Watershed Stewardship have been working together since 1990 to implement a management plan to halt the decline of beachnester and migratory shorebird populations. The Point has been closed annually since 1993 and is the only undisturbed beach habitat along the Atlantic coast of Delaware.

For more information, contact Cape Henlopen State Park at 302-645-8983.